



La Société

For nature, history and
science in Guernsey



Small Tortoiseshell butterfly, *Aglais utica* at Les Tielles. Photo courtesy of Barry Wells.

President's Report

Our Secretary has pulled together a varied and interesting newsletter for you which I hope you find enjoyable.

Sadly for us Laura Bampton who was Chair of our Scientific Committee has moved to the UK. Laura undertook a huge amount of work on this Committee taking the lead in responding to numerous questions and queries from the public, commenting on planning applications and in particular our responses to the proposed redevelopment of Longue Hougue South. My thanks to Laura and very best wishes for the future.

I am pleased to announce that Helen Litchfield of our Botany Section has been appointed Chairperson of the committee in Laura's place. I have every confidence that Helen will do a sterling job in representing La Société in this very important role.

My thanks to Kate Lee and Lesley Bourgaize for all the work they put into organising our stall at the West Show. We received lots of positive feedback on how good it looked and what a great idea it was to have more Sections represented. Thank you also to all the volunteers that were in attendance at the stall over the two days.

This year's £1,000 bursary was awarded to Clare Marshall, an MRes student studying marine biology at the University of Plymouth.

We are fortunate and thankful to have funds donated to enable us to award this annual Bursary. Clare has extensive marine conservation experience, having volunteered for the Cornwall Wildlife Trust, the Marine Biological Association and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science to name a few. Clare is planning to undertake her own research project on the island's seagrass habitats. We will ask her to share with you her progress and findings when available.

Earlier this year we held a presentation for deputies and some representatives from the business community to attend. The aim was to share with them how much trouble our local nature is in which is mainly due to the lack of funding and recognition of its importance to each of us. This was a successful event that triggered indepth discussion and also enthusiasm for the establishment of a Centre for Nature. I do feel nature is finally starting to receive recognition for its intrinsic value to our lives.

Our Secretary Kate has enclosed "our books for sale list". With Christmas fast approaching you might consider some of the editions as lovely gifts.

Another great gift idea is La Société membership and with more frequent Junior events now being offered it could be ideal for families with young children.

Finally, the Town Church Christmas Tree Festival is on between 4th December and 4th January 2022. If you are passing the Church why not pop in and take a look at all the charity trees including ours.

Donna Francis - President

Volunteer Vacancies - Section Secretaries

We are currently looking for Section Secretaries for the following Sections:

Climate Change

Marine Biology

Zoology

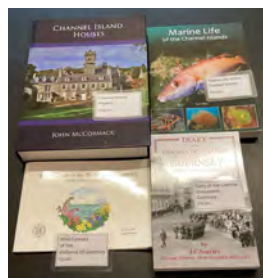
A Section Secretary is responsible for arranging meetings, talks and outdoor events for Members. They have the use of the Section room for meetings and the Frossard Theatre for talks. Section Secretaries have a seat on Council. For further information kindly contact the Secretary Kate Lee email secretary@societe.org.gg

Christmas Gift Ideas & Local View Christmas Cards

We have a good selection of local history and nature books available for sale in our office at Candie, our book list is enclosed for your perusal. You can also order books online at www.societe.org.gg and have the books posted to you or you can collect from Candie during opening hours Tues/Thurs/Sat between 10am and 11.30am. Below are some of our best sellers. We also sell packs of 6 Christmas cards, local view with a Christmas greeting – 6 cards for £1.00 available from the office.

During November we will be also selling a selection of reasonably priced second hand books of local interest – the office will be open between 10 am and noon on Saturday 13th,

Tuesday 16th and Thursday 18th of November for browsing. Please note parking at Candie is easier on a Saturday morning.



You might like to consider buying Société membership for family and friends as a Christmas Present. If you do so be sure to mention it is a gift and include your address (for the welcome pack) and the recipients address etc. You can join on line at www.societe.org.gg

Subscription Rates for 2022

Subscription rates remain unchanged for 2022 as follows:

	Local	Overseas
Single	£28	£25
Double/Family	£34	£25
Student	£5	£5
Corporate	£200	£200
Schools	£20	£20
Life Membership-single	£360	£360
Life Membership-double	£480	£480

Subscriptions for 2022 will be taken by Direct Debit and Standing Order in early January 2022. If you pay by Standing Order please check that the amount you pay is correct as per the subscription rates above. Payments by cash, cheque and Paypal via our website are due on 1st January 2022. Payment by Direct Debit ("DD") reduces our administration considerably and is our preferred method of payment. Payments in cash or by cheque incur bank charges so we really would be grateful if would change to DD. If you don't already pay by DD please consider switching to DD for 2022, a DD form is enclosed for those Members who currently pay by cash, cheque or Paypal. Kindly return the DD form to Candie before the end of November to give us time to process the form and send it to your bank.

If you currently have a local single membership but have children, have you considered switching to a family membership to take advantage of La Société's junior events on offer? For more details of our Junior events please see pages 19 to 21.

Publication of 2020 Transactions

We hope to have the Transactions before the end of January 2022. Members will be notified by email when copies are ready for collection from Candie. If we don't have your email address kindly send it to our Secretary Kate Lee - email secretary@societe.org.gg

Collection of 2019 Transactions

We have almost 100 uncollected 2019 Transactions (photo of a Maidenhair Spleenwort fern on the front cover) plus earlier years here at Candie. You will no doubt appreciate that the Transactions are costly to print so we would ask you kindly to come and collect your copy during office opening hours as soon as possible. Saturday between 10am and noon is the best day for parking at Candie. If you are not sure if you have collected your 2019 Transactions you can email Kate secretary@societe.org.gg and she will check for you. If you no longer wish to receive the Transactions or would prefer an electronic version in future then kindly contact Kate. Finally if you are unable to come to Candie due to ill health please tell Kate so that she can arrange delivery.

Section Reports

Archaeology

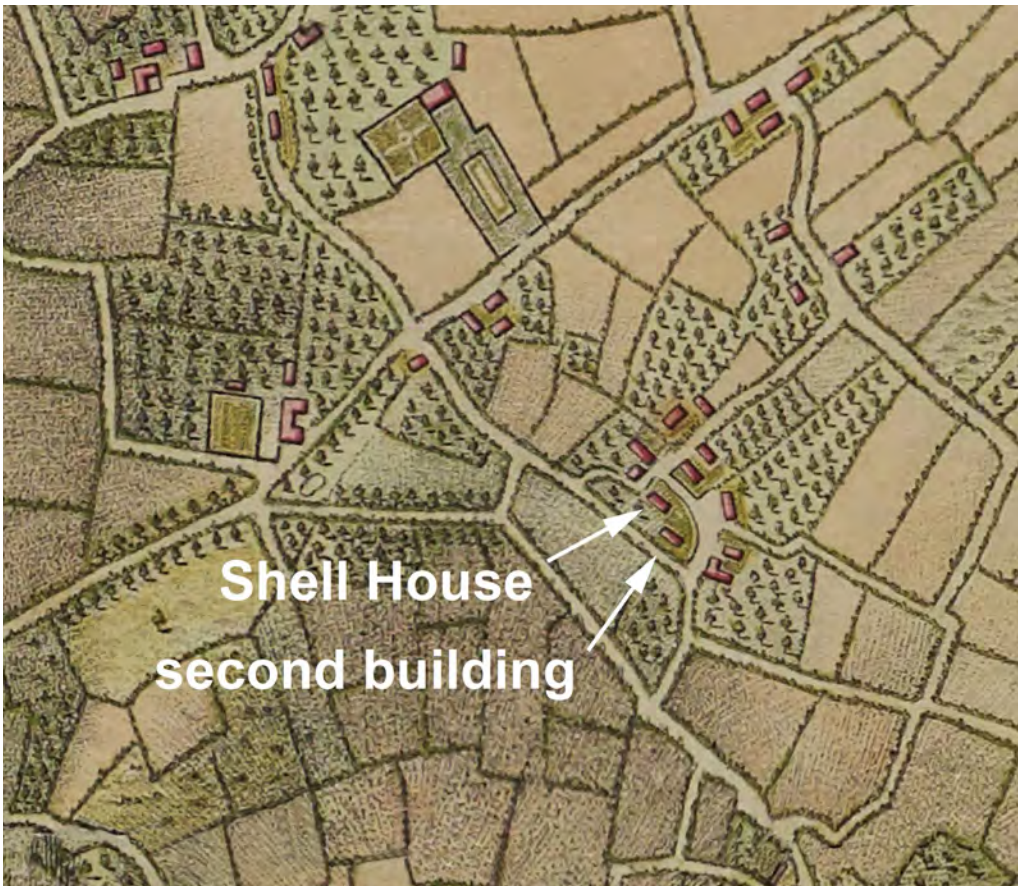
In the spring human bone was found eroding out at the top of the beach near Fort Pembroke. Initially we thought that this was probably coming from the remains of a single burial, perhaps that of a shipwrecked sailor. However on investigation it proved to be much more mysterious and probably very ancient. Instead of a single skeleton we excavated remains from at least four individuals, mostly pieces of skull, positioned in four discreet piles. They may have originally been placed in small pits and could have been in containers which have long since rotted away. The bone has not yet been radiocarbon dated, but it is likely that these are prehistoric remains and could be as early as Neolithic. They may have been associated with a funerary monument, there is no record of one in this area but it could have washed away and perhaps there is more to discover buried beneath the headland itself.



The four piles of bone on Pembroke headland; 2 metre scale. Photo courtesy of Phil de Jersey.

In July Professor Carenza Lewis (of Time Team) visited Guernsey and gave a very topical talk entitled ‘Pits, Pots and Pandemics’. She described results from a Citizen Science project, where test pits are dug in gardens across a village and the pottery found is dated and used to map the development of the settlement over time. A particularly interesting result which emerged from this method was the way in which the 14th century Black Death caused parts of villages to be abandoned and new areas to be taken up as the population recovered.

Currently we are working in the garden of 'The Shell House' in Le Villocq (Castel). This late medieval house has stood empty for a long time and was badly damaged by fire twenty years ago. The new owner, who plans to restore the house, has kindly given us permission to excavate in advance of any works. We are particularly interested in this site because of the early date of the house and because there was another building in the garden behind it. This second building can only be seen on the 1787 Duke of Richmond map; nothing is known about its age or function and we wanted to see what we could find out about it. So far we have identified evidence of walls which survive as marks in the soil, the stone having been carefully removed for re-use. We also suspect that one end of the building may partly survive within an existing garden wall and we are about to open a new test pit to investigate this.



1787 map showing "The Shell House" in Le Villocq and the mysterious second building.

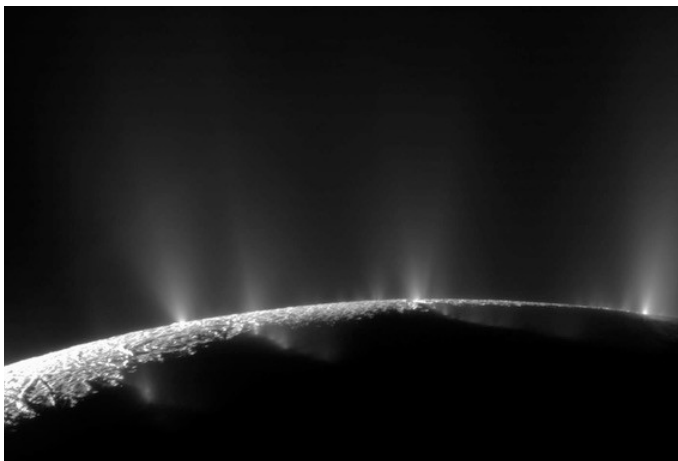
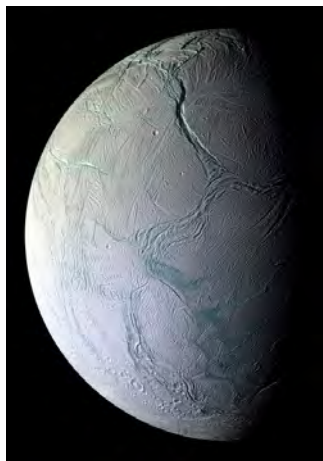
Tanya Walls - Archaeology Section Secretary

Astronomy

Sun, Star & Solar System Workshop

This summer, we hosted a group of young people from the Youth Commission, ages ranging from 11 – 14 years, the course aiming at a pre-selection GCSE subject cohort assuming no knowledge of astronomy. This 4-week science-based presentation looked at the structure of the Solar System. Lecturers Jean M Dean, Anthony Nel and Thomas Harvey detailed 2- hour weekly talks on the order of the planets and groupings, their relative sizes and distances from the Earth, their relationship with each other and unique characteristics. The latest images and data were presented from various space institutions around the world including NASA and ESA. It looked at Earth's uniqueness and ability to support life, and considered whether any earth-like planets existed around other stars. The focus on the 8 planets and the Sun was completed in the final week with a talk on the Asteroid Belt, the Kuiper Belt, the Oort Cloud and included the current discovery of Exoplanets.

Of particular interest was current investigative spacecraft and their journeys, providing photographic material for research. For example, NASA's robotic Cassini team who have been exploring Enceladus for more than a decade – a small icy moon of Saturn barely 500 kilometers in diameter – which has concluded the presence of liquid water with hydrothermal vents. Dramatic plumes, both large and small, spray water ice and vapor from many locations along the famed “tiger stripes” near the south pole of Saturn's moon Enceladus. The tiger stripes are four prominent, approximately 84-mile- long (135-kilometer) fractures that cross the moon's south polar terrain. There is evidence that gases may be originating from the moon's surface or interior. Cassini's cosmic dust analyser recorded thousands of hits from tiny particles of dust or ice, possibly coming from a cloud around the moon or from the adjacent E ring, a broad ring of dust-sized ice particles in which Enceladus orbits. The magnetometer aboard NASA's robotic Cassini spacecraft discovered – perhaps an atmosphere – is pushing against Saturn's magnetic field. The science team intend making plans to return to Enceladus for a closer look. *(Information courtesy of NASA Science: Solar System Exploration)*



Enceladus: Moon of Saturn, Cassini mission 25 kilometres from the surface.

Enceladus: Water jets from fractures in the crust. Images courtesy of: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Space Science Institute

Enthusiastically interactive, discussion was encouraged throughout the course, as a comprehensive and exciting view of the subject was given. Sadly, the cloudy skies for the sessions prevented solar telescopic observation of the Sun's photosphere and chromosphere. We look forward to further meetings with these young minds, to continue to update today's explorations and deepen their scientific knowledge.

Jill Barnicoat - Group Outreach Officer

To read more about Astronomy and Astrophotography please visit www.astronomy.or.gg.

Facebook: [La Société Guernesésaise](#).

Solar Open Days

As part of our section's public outreach, we offer the opportunity to come up to the observatory and experience how our section's equipment can be used to make observations of the Sun. Primarily during the summer season, with day-time visibility and clear skies.

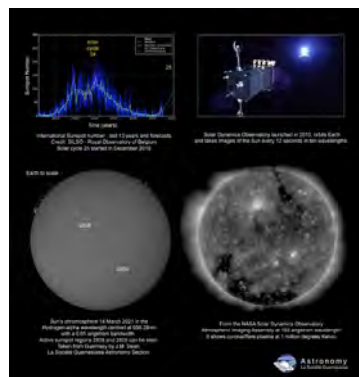
To view the Sun's photosphere (the visible surface of the Sun) we use both the club's normal night-time telescopes, with special purpose solar filters attached, and the club's heliostat, which uses mirrors to collect light from the Sun and projects it onto the wall of our clubroom. Using these pieces of equipment, we can observe various phenomena of the Sun. Some features of interest which can be seen using this equipment include sunspots, which are spots of cooler material on the Sun's surface caused by its magnetic field inhibiting convection in these areas, solar faculae which are brighter hotter areas on the Sun's surface, and solar granulation which is the top of convective cells on the Sun's surface.

To view the Sun's chromosphere (a layer of the Sun's atmosphere), we use a special solar telescope that has been designed solely to look at the Sun. This telescope not only blocks out the majority of light to make viewing of the Sun safe, it also cuts out all other light, except that around the wavelength of the hydrogen alpha emission line. This allows the telescope to block out the overwhelming light of the photosphere and focus only on the chromosphere. Some features of interest that are viewable using this telescope are filaments and prominences, which are jets of gas that have been ejected and suspended above the Sun's surface by its magnetic field, and plages which are brighter spots in the chromosphere similar to the faculae of the photosphere below.

Anthony Nel – Astronomy Section Member

Observation of the Sun through the solar telescope enables day-time viewing at the observatory. Currently we are mid-way through the course: 'Our Home. The Solar System', where attendees have the opportunity to view through such specially adapted telescopes, on a Saturday afternoon. The Sun is just beginning to increase its activity, coming out of an 11-year cycle (11 - 12 year cycles from low activity to high), so viewing can be highly rewarding.

Jill Barnicoat – Group Outreach Officer



Compilation of solar activity, March 14th 2021. Image credits: JM Dean, SILSO and NASA.

Dr David Falla

Frank Dowding of the Astronomy Section read his memories of Dr David Falla at the Société AGM in August. Colin Spicer had nominated Dr Falla for Honorary Membership back in January and Dr Falla had been informed.

“Last month, July 20th Dr David Falla died.

Dr David Falla was the man who started the Société Astronomy section in Guernsey.

During December of 1971 Dr Falla was approached by a prominent member of La Société to ask if he could start an astronomy section in Guernsey, if so it would be put to Council for approval as a section. He placed an article in the Guernsey Press for anyone interested to write to him at his address in Wales.

Now I would like to tell you something of his academic achievements that led up to this point. David Falla was born in Guernsey 1934, educated at Amherst and Elizabeth College. Attended Bristol University where he achieved a degree and a PhD in physics.

He held research posts at Manchester University and Queen Mary College London. He worked at Cern in Geneva and the Rutherford laboratories at Cambridge. While at London he obtained a Science teaching Fellowship and was appointed Physics lecturer at Aberystwyth University of Wales.

Following his letter in the Guernsey Press about a dozen of us met him at the Guille Allez Library and in February 1972 the section was formed.



Dr David Falla. Photo courtesy of David Le Conte.

Dr Falla or David as we now called him stayed in Aberystwyth as a lecturer but every University holiday he would come over to Guernsey. His brother Geoff and I were the ones he liaised with while he was away. He would arrange with the OGH hotel to use one of their rooms and we would arrange for a projector. David arranged everything else in great detail to make full use of each of his times in Guernsey. We met several times on each occasion to look at the stars and constellations or discuss anything of interest in astronomy.

He had this quiet way of explaining difficult things.

We had around twenty members and the use of a telescope.

This continued for 10 years until he met David le Conte. They became very good friends and as David Falla said 'We need a base of our own and a secretary here all the time'. David Falla handed over the secretaryship to David Le Conte in 1982.

David Falla continued his lectures at Aberystwyth. He became a member of the Institute of Physics and a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society.

He had many published scientific papers including 'Light Echoes' and 'Particle Physics as Applied to Astronomy'.

Up to about ten years ago David Falla was a regular visitor to Guernsey and always visited the observatory until he suffered a stroke which did not affect his mind but seriously curtailed his travelling.

Dr David Falla died on July 20th 2021 but those of us who knew him will never forget him."

Frank Dowding BSc – Astronomy Section Member

Bat Section

If you find an injured bat please contact the GSPCA direct on 257261 or 07781 104082 (24 hour emergency line). Any bat queries can be sent to Charles Hurford (bat Section Secretary) by email to bats@societe.org.gg

Botany

We have enjoyed a lovely, busy summer of meetings and events, beginning with our **Regular Guided Walks** on the 1st Saturday in the month, open to all. On the 5th June we visited Hougue Patris at L'Ancrese to look at the orchid fields. These have been worked on by the Conservation Volunteers, Environment Guernsey and L'Ancrese Commons Council and the number of orchids and associated flora is increasing at a rapid rate. Testimony to all the hard work that has gone on and is still going on there. Other notable plants are Lousewort, Bog Pimpernel, Heath Milkwort and Marsh Pennywort. July took us to Petit Bôt, August to Pembroke and September to St Germain.

Evening Walks

For those who wish to take botanising a step further, our **Recorder Sessions**, held every Thursday morning are a valuable way in which to undertake a more serious study of botany. A small group of enthusiasts get together to make a detailed record of a given area. We have been invited to areas not previously surveyed and meetings have been both fun and informative. Records are then submitted to our local record centre and the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's database. I would strongly urge anyone with more than a passing interest to come along and assure them of a warm welcome. These are open to every paid up member, from beginner to expert.

Our **Food & Flowers** events were very pleasant occasions. A guided walk followed by lunch and we will be offering these again next year.

The **Grow Guernsey Natives** project is racing along. Raymond and Chris have grown 700 plants of 7 different species and an agreement has been reached with Grow Ltd to pot them on and begin retailing them in Spring 2022. Seed gathering has been carried out and plans for next year are very much underway.

Rachel Rabey held a most enjoyable **Study morning** at her beautiful home. We looked in detail at identifying grasses. Not the easiest family to get to grips with but Rachel made it seem so.

Botanical finds: Jennie Grange reported *Euphorbia maculata*, Spotted Spurge, growing in a gateway in Rue des Goddards. This plant has been recorded in Jersey but this is the first record for Guernsey.



Some Members of the Recording Group at Vale Pond.
Photo courtesy of Anne Woodington.



Spotted Spurge, *Euphorbia maculata*. Photo courtesy of Jennie Grange.

Anne Woodington together with John Horton found a *Himantoglossum hircinum*, Lizard Orchid growing on Longis Common. It used to grow on L'Ancrese common and a request has been put in for the area to be cleared of bramble in the hope that it will reappear.

Lepidium ruderae, Narrow-leaved Pepperwort, was found at Le Foulon cemetery. This has not been recorded since 2012.

Lysimachia maritima, Sea-milkwort, found by John Horton on Burhou.

Lysimachia nummularia, Creeping Jenny, found at two different valleys on Guernsey in quantity. This raises the question as to whether this is a garden escape or native.

Onobrychis vicifolia, Sainfoin, was found in Alderney and at the Vale Church Car Park. This may be a Pollinator Project introduction?

Phleum bertolini, Smaller Cat's-tail, was found by a visiting botanist at Petit Bôt. Records of this plant are few and far between.

Other notes:

There were record numbers of the nationally scarce *Bupleurum baldense*, Small Hare's-ear, growing in association with *Linum catharticum*, Fairy Flax at Port Soif.

Membership of the botany section now stands at 62, whilst we have 683 people who follow our Facebook page. As ever, grateful thanks to Hazel Hill for posting topical pictures of plants.

Join the Botany Section's Facebook page to find details of the monthly walks and recent plant photos. Once you have joined you can add your own images. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1310943042297921/>

The Botany Section are always interested in surveying new areas, so if you have an area of land that has been managed with conservation in mind, then please don't hesitate to email botany@societe.gg.

Helen Litchfield – Botany Section Secretary

Events

Saturday 6th November 2pm Botany walk around Claire Mare looking at wetland.

Saturday 4th December 2pm Botany walk at Château des Marais looking at wetland.

Family History

Recent Events

Family History held its first meeting of the year in April with a talk by Trevor Cooper entitled "Mansion, Manor and Merchant Houses", it was based on a book that he had recently written. He gave us an insight into the life of the occupants and their staff. Fiona Le Tissier re-enacted transcripts from diaries that had been written at the time of the occupants. This meeting was so popular we had to repeat it in June and both times it was a full house.



Talk by Trevor Cooper. Photo courtesy of Maria van der Tang.

The photo below shows Keith Pike who back in May gave us a talk on the history of the Guernsey Police up to 1920, along with a slide presentation, showing the old prison, truncheon's, headwear, different types of handcuffs. He likes to dress up for the occasion in his old police uniform!



Talk by Keith Pike entitled "The History of the Guernsey Police".

Photo courtesy of Maria van der Tang.

In July we had a walk around Cambridge Park with Andy Walker who told us about the house that used to stand on this site and which was knocked down when Beau Sejour was built in 1976. We then moved around the softball pitch towards the corner that comes out onto the road opposite Fosse Andre, then we proceeded to Cambridge Park and then to Les Cotils, before finishing up back on Cambridge Park behind the skate park.



Walk and talk by Andy Walker on Cambridge Park and its surroundings. Photo courtesy of Maria van der Tang.

Forthcoming Events

The last meeting of the year will be our AGM on Saturday 27th November, Frossard Theatre, Candie at 10.30am. After the AGM there will be a slide presentation of old Guernsey photographs by Brian de Jersey.

Maria van der Tang – Family History Section Secretary.

Family History Room Opening Times

The research room at the Russels, Les Cotils is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday each month from 10am until noon, and by appointment at all other times. This can be arranged by calling Maria on 248538

If any of you have a family story or article you would like to see printed in the next Journal, please email it to us at researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk

Any general Family History queries should be addressed to The Family History Section, PO Box 314, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 3TG. Alternatively email Maria van der Tang researchenquiries@hotmail.co.uk

Historic Buildings

Events

Saturday 23rd October - a talk by John McCormack entitled “Lavabos and Evers: washing and washing up” at 7.30pm Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 13th November - a talk by Eric Grimsley entitled “The Influence of Robert Adam on John Wilson” at 7.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 27th November - a talk by Tanya Walls entitled “The Medieval Chapels of Guernsey” at 7.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Saturday 11th December - a talk by John McCormack entitled “The Peculiarities of Buildings in Alderney” at 7.30pm, Frossard Theatre, Candie.

Ornithology

Some Sightings from August and early September 2021

The most surprising sighting was a **Goosander** at La Claire Mare on 10th August. Initially seen by veterans Tony Bisson and Peter Vaudin, (together with RC - Royston Carré?). This is probably the first August sighting (none since 1993) for a species which is normally a scarce winter visitor. The last sighting was at the Vale Pond in 2014.

There have been good sightings of birds of prey. Single **Honey Buzzards** (over) were seen at Les Grantez and Talbot Valley (MAG). A **Hobby** was seen over Les Grantez (JH) and at Pleinmont before heading out to sea (AJB). Pleinmont was also the location for a **Merlin** (MAG) and an **Osprey** (over) (MAG, CM). Three confiding **Dotterel** at Mt. Herault gave good photo and viewing opportunities of a very smart species to many members.

A **Knot**, seen initially at L’Erée (JH, DS) at the beginning of September was a welcome visitor. They flock in thousands at Snettisham, Norfolk, but are not often seen here in the island. **Bar-tailed Godwit** have been seen at various locations along the West Coast. **Green Sandpiper** first appeared at La Claire Mare on 9th July (DS).

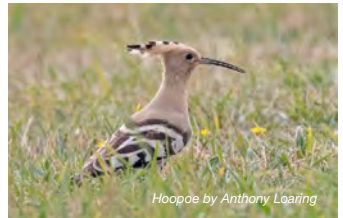
Little Stint were recorded both from Alderney and Jersey before being seen at Rocque Poisson on 7th September (JH) and continued to stay for several days.



Little Stint by Rod Ferbrache



Green Sandpiper by Julie Davis



Hoopoe by Anthony Learing

A **Hoopoe** was very visible at Pleinmont from 16th August. (AJB, AKB)

There have also been excellent sightings of several **Wryneck** at Chouet, Pleinmont (one ringed - much to the interest of people visiting a Nature Guernsey event), Chateau des Marais (one ringed) and La Claire Mare.

Tree Pipit and **Grasshopper Warbler** (JH) showed at Pleinmont on 26th August.

Whinchat have shown well at Pleinmont and along the West Coast, especially Fort Hommet which has also been a hotspot for **Pied Flycatchers**. **Melodious Warbler** have been sighted at Fort Hommet and Pleinmont. Recorders: AJB Tony Bisson, AKB Anne Bisson, MAG Mark Guppy, JH Jamie Hooper, CM Chris Massey), DS Dave Spicer,

For more detailed sightings, please look at the Guernsey Birds Website,

<http://www.guernseybirds.org.gg>

The website has been improved recently and seems to be loading more quickly. Thanks to Jamie and Phil Atkinson for this.

Earlier in the summer, **Cuckoo** was seen regularly at Rue de Bergers. It is possible that they have bred there for two years in succession.



Formerly a breeding species in Guernsey and Sark, the Red-backed Shrike is now a rare visitor passing through. Mark Lawlor first saw this individual (only the tenth recorded since 1996) at Portinifer on 14th September. It was a juvenile/1st winter bird with strong rufous colouring and vermiculation (dense and irregular small barring) on the back. It will winter in tropical Africa.

Its diet consists mainly of insects but will also catch small mammals and song birds. Once caught, the larger prey items are stuck onto thorns making it easier for the bird to tear off the flesh. This behaviour explains why it's also known as the butcher bird. Its curved beak is just visible in Dave's photo.

As with other shrikes, it will sit motionless on a branch or bush, waiting for unwary creatures to come within striking range. It can mimic small song birds to lure them in. This one showed well for a couple of days.

Even more exciting, and one of the birding highlights of 2021, is a confirmed breeding record of **Short-eared Owl**. This is a first for Guernsey and probably a first for the Channel Islands. We hope to have an illustrated talk about this for the AGM in January by one of our members who has was one of the first to notice the owls and has been following their season. (Rod's photo is just an illustration and was taken back in 2015).



Short-eared Owl by Rod Ferbrache

Past Events and Outings

Owl Walk 20th August - Our programme of walks resumed after a summer break with an owl walk on the evening of 20th August led by Chris Maurant, following supper at the Longfrie. Three Barn Owls were seen, a pair and a single bird.

Shingle Bank and La Claire Mare 11th September - Nine people joined me for a walk along the Shingle Bank as far as La Claire Mare where Chris Maurant gave a ringing demonstration.



Chris ringing a Sedge Warbler by Julie Davis



Start of the Shingle Bank Walk by Julie Davis

Pelagic Trip 12th September

Chris had a busy week-end as he had organised a pelagic trip the following day on Richard Keen's boat. It was an eight hour round trip which headed north-west of Alderney and the Hurd Deep. The wind swung round to the east so sightings were limited, but some close encounters with tuna made up for it.

It is worth mentioning that over recent years, rafts of mainly **Balearic Shearwater** have been gathering in their thousands off the South Cliffs in July. Possibly fish are moving into the area and the birds are taking advantage of easy pickings.

Also, during the annual ringing programme of Storm Petrels on Burhou this summer, one was re-trapped (had already been ringed). Further investigation revealed that it was the second oldest **Storm Petrel** and had been ringed 21 years earlier by Jamie Hooper. I'm amazed that the smallest ocean dwelling bird can live as long as that.

Julie Davis - Ornithology Section Member



Blue-fin Tuna by Ian Le Page



Storm Petrel by Ian Le Page

Upcoming Events

Sunday 14th November - shared walk with RSPB at Belle Greve - details to follow.

Saturday 27th November - 3 to 4.30 pm - Guided Walk at Rue des Hougue.

Thursday 8th December - 7.30 pm Indoor meeting in the Section room at Candie with mince pies.

Thursday 6th January 2022 - 7.30 pm AGM in the Frossard Theatre, Candie followed by an illustrated talk on the first CI breeding record of Short-eared Owls by Dave Carre (*to be confirmed*)

Please keep an eye on our website calendar for updates on these and all our events – www.societe.org.gg

Nature Guernsey

Nature Guernsey has been organising family events since 2018, highlighting the fascinating flora, fauna and history of our island. These events are free and open to all, with one of the aims being to engage with non-members and promote the benefits of La Société membership.

Having planned to begin our events early in 2021, after the disruptions of 2020, we were disappointed when Lockdown 2 prevented us from holding our planned rock pool event during February half term. The event was rescheduled for the Easter holidays and leaders were staggered by the number of people who joined us at Portelet harbour on a sunny Friday in April. Around 100 adults and children enjoyed a great morning with a good selection of creatures found, including this small but beautiful Gem Anemone, *Aulactinia verrucosa*.



**Gem anemone,
Aulactinia verrucosa.**
Photo courtesy of
Lesley Bourgaize.

In June we arranged a Day of Discovery mainly based around two of La Société's reserves. In the morning a guided walk took participants through the lanes from our base at the Bridget Ozanne Orchid fields up to and around the Silbe; a pleasant, tranquil stroll looking at all fauna and flora along the way. In the afternoon members of Botany Section led a guided walk around the Orchid fields, which were looking splendid, while members of the Entomology Section led a large number of excited children on a bug hunt. The venue for the final event of the day switched to Saumarez Park, where members of Bat Section led a walk, which proved as popular as always.

In July we returned to the seashore for an event entitled Crabs and Cocks at Cow Bay, where we were ably supported by members of both Marine Biology and Archaeology Sections. Not a huge amount of cocks were found but the number and variety of crabs and other creatures discovered, did not disappoint. However, probably the most stunning find of the afternoon was a Spiny Starfish *Marthasterias glacialis*, which caused great excitement, not least amongst the event leaders!

At the end of August, for the third year running, an open day was held at Pleinmont, based in one of La Société's fields. As always, good numbers of visitors joined us during the day to take part in a range of activities, which included moth trap emptying and ID, a guided walk looking at the variety of wild life in the area, an insect hunt and bird ringing demonstrations. The highlight for many was the chance to see a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* up close and personal. This bird is a member of the woodpecker family with an amazing ability to turn its head through 180 degrees, and the bird trapped by ringer Trevor Bourgaize and his trainee Charlotte, performed superbly.

Nature Guernsey ran a competition on La Société's stand at the West Show asking children to guess how many moth species can be found in Guernsey. At present there are 1,337, and first prize went to sisters Orla and Erin Pipet who guessed 1,350. They, and the runners up, were presented with their prizes at our Pleinmont event.

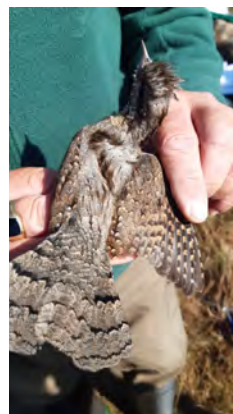
By the time you read this, our next event, a walk to Chapelle Dom Hue, will have taken place on October 10th, weather permitting. It has been planned in response to the interest shown in the digs which took place on the islet in 2017 and 2018, information about which formed part of La Société's display at the West Show. We are indebted yet again to the Archaeology section for their support in organising and leading this event.

As always, the Nature Guernsey Committee is very grateful to all who have supported us during the year, either volunteers or participants. Keep checking La Société's on line diary and the Nature Guernsey Facebook page; you never know, we might just squeeze one more event in before the end of the 2021!

Lesley Bourgaize - Nature Guernsey Co-ordinator.



Spiny starfish,
Marthasterias glacialis.
Photo courtesy of
Lesley Bourgaize.



Wryneck, *Jynx torquilla*
being ringed.
Photo courtesy of
Lesley Bourgaize.

Mini BioBlitz

La Société and The Pollinator Project were delighted to welcome whole Year 5 cohorts from La Houquette and Vale schools to a mini BioBlitz on Wednesday 15th September at Lihou headland, to record all the species we could detect within a 24-hour period.

Traps had been laid for moths, scaly crickets and small mammals overnight and a total of 117 species were recorded throughout the day with more remaining to be identified.

We were lucky enough to be joined throughout the whole event by naturalist and TV presenter

Nick Baker who was in the island as the guest of The Pollinator Project and proved a fantastic addition to BioBlitz, joining in with each of the various activities and inspiring the children with his infectious enthusiasm.



Nick Baker at the BioBlitz
Photo courtesy of Barry Wells.



Cuckoo Spit insect, *Philaenus spumarius*.
Photo courtesy of Andy Marquis.

La Houquette joined us for rockpooling where we found cushion stars, light bulb sea squirts, porcelain crabs, snakelocks anemones and many more interesting creatures, before moving onto dry land. The children divided into groups, each of whom took turns to learn about plants, insects and birds in lively sessions led by volunteers from La Société and The Pollinator Project, as well as checking slow worm refugia and seeing a wood mouse released from a small mammal trap.

We were joined for the afternoon by Vale School, whose Year 5 is so large that they were split between the two sessions. The children were beautifully behaved throughout and really engaged with the activities, asking lots of questions about their discoveries. Highlights included a sighting of a Brown Argus butterfly and a kestrel which seemed to be showing off for its audience!

Many thanks to the attending schools and to all the volunteers who made the event a) possible and b) a great success!

Becky Ogier – Education and Conservation Leader

Juniors

We are delighted to report that the revival of La Société's Junior events has been a great success and we are extremely grateful to all our enthusiastic members who have come along and supported these events. We would also like to take this opportunity to again thank the Section Secretaries and volunteers who have given their time to help plan and lead these sessions with their expert knowledge.

Our first Junior event of the year was an archaeology event which you can read about in the archaeology paragraph below. Our February event was held online via Zoom, due to lockdown, and was in partnership with the Astronomy Section. This was a fascinating talk presented by Tom Harvey about the Mars rovers and in particular the new rover Perseverance which landed on Mars on Thursday 18th February. Unfortunately, due to lockdown, we were unable to have a junior March event but we made up for it in April by holding 3 events.

We started the month with a wet and windy botany walk led by Helen Litchfield, Botany Section Secretary and special guest Raymond Evison OBE around Fort Doyle. Our second event was a bird walk along the Shingle Bank and a visit to the Claire Mare Nature Reserve which was guided by Ornithology representatives Julie Davis, Trevor Bourgaize and Lesley Bourgaize. Our final April event was another botany walk in the hope of better weather; thankfully we enjoyed a sunny wildflower walk along the Petit Bôt cliffs with spotter sheets and magnifying glasses at the ready.

Our May event was a pollinator walk in collaboration with The Pollinator Project and despite the blustery weather which was against us, we managed to spot a handful of different pollinators as well as lots of other insects around Chouet headland.



An image of the spotter sheet used for our Junior wildflower walk in April. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.



Our Junior pollinator walk around Chouet headland with the Pollinator Project. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

The Botany Section also led another walk in May, this time around the Port Soif and Portinfer headland to see what native wildflowers we could find.

June was a collaboration with local charity The Clean Earth Trust to take part in their event for World Oceans Day. Our Juniors were invited to a morning beach clean and survey down at Rocquaine Bay as well an afternoon rock pooling session led by the Education Officers which went down a treat. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our July event, however we did still hold our monthly Junior archaeology event which you can read about below. August brought an opportunity for our juniors to watch a bird ringing demonstration by Trevor Bourgaize at Château des Marais which brought real excitement for the Juniors to see birds up so close.



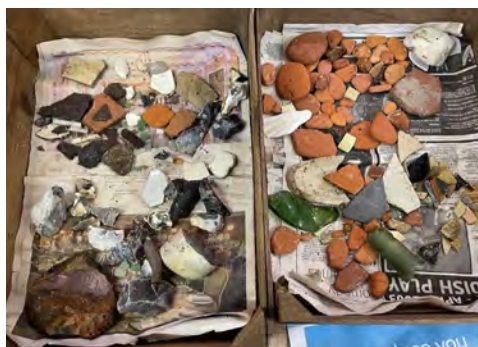
A chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) held by Trevor Bourgaize at our Junior bird ringing demonstration event. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

Lastly our most recent event in September was a partnership with the Historic Buildings Section. Callum Tostevin-Hall from Historic Buildings Section kindly led our Juniors on a walk around Vale Church where we looked at the outside of the church, pointing out the medieval Priory remains, as well as the prehistoric and Roman material in the immediate surroundings or reused in the church walling itself.

Throughout 2021, the Education Officers have also assisted running the monthly Junior Archaeology Group led by Tanya Walls. We started the year off in January looking at Le Creux ès Faies dolmen and the site where the dolmen builders lived at L'Erée near Lihou headland. The Juniors were able to have a go at digging out their own finds from the bank at this site.

Unfortunately, lockdown cancelled our February and March events but we were back in action in April to wash and look at the prehistoric pottery and flint which we collected at L'Erée. Our May event involved a visit to Castle Cornet where we looked at finds from excavations at the castle in the 1970's and the excavation site itself. Our Juniors also had the opportunity to visit areas of the castle not normally open to the public as well the chance to handle some Tudor artefacts.

For our June event, our older Junior members joined Andy Lowe across the rocks to the back of Castle Cornet to see the Tudor sally-port. After this, the whole group went to Cow Bay (the beach below



An image of some of the finds our Juniors found on Cow Bay during our June archaeology event. Photo courtesy of Sarah Allez.

the walls of Castle Cornet) to look for finds from Roman and medieval shipwrecks. Nature Guernsey kindly joined us for this event to help our Juniors identify the marine life we encountered. Our July event was a follow up on our Cow Bay trip where we washed and sorted the finds we collected.

In August our Juniors got a chance to take part in an archaeological dig themselves at The Shell House in Le Villocq. The Shell House is a ruined medieval house where our local archaeologists are currently undertaking an excavation in the garden. Despite the rain, we had a great time getting stuck in and so our October Junior event is going to be the same, hopefully without the rain! There will be the opportunity for our Juniors to see what has been found so far as well as to try some digging themselves.

We are delighted to be continuing these monthly archaeology events throughout 2022 along with a further event each month relating to a different Section of La Société or topic about nature or the environment.

The details of our events are sent out to all members of La Société who hold a family membership for whom these activities are free of charge. If you currently have a local single membership but have children, have you considered switching to a family membership to take advantage of La Société's junior events on offer?

If you are interested in joining the mailing list or would like to hear more about our junior events, please email Sarah Allez at eca@societe.org.gg

Sarah Allez – Education Conservation Assistant

Upcoming Junior events for 2021:

Saturday 6th November, Archaeology Event – details to be confirmed nearer to the date.

Saturday 20th November, 10:00am – 12:00pm, A talk by Elizabeth Sweet about her visit to Antarctica including interactive activity at La Société Section room, Candie.

Saturday 4th December, 10:00am-12:00pm, Festive Wreath Making Workshop led by Sarah Allez, at La Société section room, Candie.

Saturday 11th December, Archaeology Event – A tour of Grange House led by Tanya Walls.

La Société's Conservation Herd

La Société's Conservation Herd, managed by Dave Bartram, has been grazing the headland at Icart. This is the first time in almost 100 years since cattle have been recorded grazing the area.

In 2017 Agriculture, Countryside and Land Management Services (ACLMS) began a habitat restoration project with the aim to restore the States-owned land at Icart field to a locally rare dry grassland habitat which will support a wide range of plants, insects and birds. The restored area forms part of a Site of Special Significance (SSS). The field was overrun with bracken and scrub which have been dominant for some time. Since it has been cleared dormant native bluebells have flourished on the site and many islanders have enjoyed the beautiful views on the new footpath. Over 700 new tree and shrub species were planted by ACLMS around the perimeter of the site, including English oak, gorse, hawthorn, elder and crab apple.

Grazing the site is part of the continued management and restoration of Icart. The cattle will trample new growth bracken and scrub and allow the more delicate vegetation to continue to flourish. Grazing improves the species diversity and will enable the grassland to re-establish with native wildflowers, which will provide a source of food for insects, and in turn, the birds and bats which feed on them.



David licking his lips in anticipation of a new field to graze. Photo courtesy of Dave Bartram.

Icart headland also has remnant pockets of coastal heathland habitat, which its hoped will establish at the Icart field. This habitat is of international importance, as it is among the scarcest habitats found in Guernsey. Its enhancement through this project will greatly improve the biodiversity and special nature of this area over time.

Dave Bartram, Manager of La Société Guernesiais Conservation Herd, says: “I am pleased to be able to continue the restoration work that ACLMS started and the herd will be a great management tool to increase biodiversity, grazing will return the area to a wildflower rich grassland by keeping scrub from establishing and creating a diverse grassland sward, whilst their dung is a great food source for many invertebrates. Why use a mower when you can use a mooer”.

A Spokesperson from ACLMS said “It is amazing to see the ongoing rejuvenation of the site in such a short space of time. Since the clearance of some scrub and bracken, native wildflowers in the existing seedbank have flourished. It is anticipated that the reintroduction of grazing to the area will continue to improve the habitat which will support a wide range of plants, insects and birds”.

The Conservation Herd will be grazing within electric fencing for several weeks around the area and will be checked daily by the team which cares for them. La Société would welcome assistance from regular dog walkers and people who walk or exercise in the area. 'Watchers' are sought to keep an eye on the cattle when they're passing and report any problems or concerns to the Conservation Herd team. If you wish to meet the team please contact conservationherd@societe.org.gg

Dave Bartram

Manager - Conservation Herd

Tel 07781 168529

Guernsey Biological Records Centre Report for Autumn

2021 marked the Strategy for Nature projects getting underway and a proportion of the Records Centre time is dedicated to working on and delivering various pieces of work. We've also taken part in the BioBlitz's, continued the DolFin Project and have a few new projects to report on.

Maerl Genetics

At Easter Dr Heidi Burdett of Heriot-Watt University and I submitted an application to the British Phycological Society to fund the genetic analysis of our maerl beds of Longue Hougue South. We were awarded £4,500 but due to covid restrictions I had to find on-island collectors.

Many thanks Ian Jowitt, Chairman of the Blue Dolphin SAC dive club and his divers, Mike, Mary, Ash, Terry and Richard who donated their time, boat and expertise and especially to Nicky Harris for introducing us and being a very capable field assistant and scientific diver.

We were able to collect 100 samples from both beds for analysis. These samples will be analysed by PhD Candidate Connie Simon Nutbrown and published in a scientific paper. This is the first such research in Guernsey or the Channel Islands.



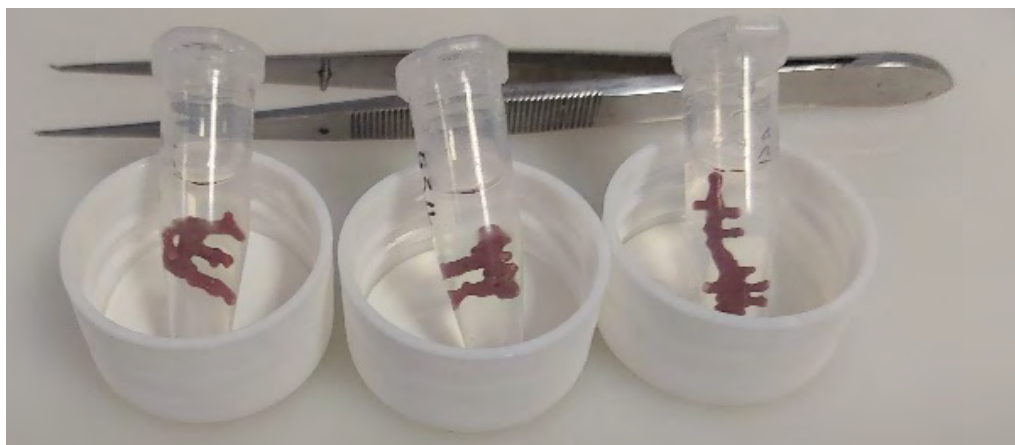
Successful post dive smiles, left to right, Mary, Nicky and Terry. Photo: Liz Sweet



Step 1: Sample preparation with sterilised equipment.



Step 2: A maerl sample in seawater in tube.



Step 3: Maerl samples in sterile Eppendorf tubes for shipping and analysis. Photos: Liz Sweet

Masters Student Bursary

We teamed up with the Jersey International Centre of Advanced Studies (JICAS) who have generously funded a £2,000 bursary for a Masters student. Zuzanna Soltysiak was awarded the bursary and she will be joining us in May 2022 to study Guernsey's dolphin population. We are looking for a host to house Zuzanna while she is here.

iRecord

All the Records Centres in the Channel Islands are encouraging people to use iRecord. To help people get to grips with it The Field Studies Centre (FSC) is hosting an online "Discovering iRecord" course starting on 11th January 2022. They have generously agreed Channel Island Recorders can sign up at the subsidised price of £20, even though their website says this is available for UK residents only.

Sign up here: <https://www.field-studies-council.org/shop/courses/discovering-irecord-2022/>

Office Move

Raymond Falla House is closing and we are moving office in November. Once our new office location is confirmed we will let everyone know.

Social Media

Finally, do you have a passion for social media? We're looking for a volunteer to take over our social media. Perhaps you're a whizz at Instagram, love Facebook or would like to write a monthly nature focused post on our website. Get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Liz Sweet, GBRC Manager

New Publication: 'A Speech delivered in the States of Guernsey in 1684' by Pierre Bonamy, edited by Richard Hocart.

We are able to offer members an opportunity to buy a copy of this booklet for £10. The subject is a speech delivered in French in the States of Election in 1684 by the Rev. Pierre Bonamy, rector of St. Pierre du Bois. The speech was printed in 1748 with an introduction and legal notes. Only one copy of this publication is known to exist. The booklet reproduces the text of the 1748 publication and also contains a translation and an introduction by Richard Hocart which sets the speech in context and discusses who might have been responsible for publication in 1748. The print run is very limited and copies will be sold on a first come, first served basis. All proceeds to La Société. Copies available from the office at Candie Tues/Thurs/Sat mornings between 10am and noon. You can also phone our Secretary on 725093 to reserve a copy for collection.

Thanks to our Corporate Membership Sponsors for 2021

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Corporate Social Responsibility

Would your workplace welcome an easy, fuss-free way to organise CSR days? Would you like an interesting and fun day out with your colleagues? La Société recently introduced an expanded range of corporate offerings for companies seeking a useful and enjoyable way to use their Corporate Social Responsibility hours. These activities include something for everyone, from dolphin surveying to bird hide restoration, and are a terrific team-building exercise - perfect for re-bonding after a difficult start to the year and a great opportunity to try something new together. Should your organisation be looking for volunteer opportunities, please contact Becky Ogier on 725093 or at ecl@societe.org.gg for our e-brochure.

Associated Groups

Alderney Wildlife Trust	Roland Gauvain	822935
Blue Dolphins Sub-Aqua Club		bluedolphinssac@gmail.com
Channel Islands Occupation Society (Guernsey)	Liz Boxall	candielodge@cwgsy.net
Friends of the Priaulx Library	Jenny Tasker	jenny@taskeronline.com
Guernsey Conservation Volunteers	Angela Salmon	721163
Guernsey Meteorological Observatory	Martin Crozier	237766
G.S.P.C.A	Steve Byrne	257261
La Société Serquaise	Jo Birch	832788
Le Cercle Français	Geoff Mahy	263029
Lé Coumité d'la Culture Guernésiaise	Dr Harry Tomlinson	255891
Guernsey Trees For Life	Andy McCutcheon	07781 110180
Plant Heritage (Guernsey Group)	Tattie Thompson	239444
Royal Society of Biology (<i>local members group</i>)	Jo Arendt	arendtjo@g.mail.com
The Alderney Society & Museum	Karen Hill	823222
The Guernsey Beekeepers' Association	Damian Harris	07911 721785
The Guernsey Botanical Trust	Cathy Morgan	07911 732912
The Guernsey Society	Michael Paul	253858
The Victor Hugo in Guernsey Society	Roy Bisson	07781 100296
WEA	Roy Bisson	07781 100296

Legacies and donations in lieu of flowers

Members are reminded that it is possible to make La Société a beneficiary of their will. Money or property can be left for general use, or if desired for a specific purpose.

They are also reminded that donations in lieu of flowers can be made in memory of members who have died.

Environment Guernsey Ltd,
1 Trinity Cottages, Torteval,
Guernsey, C.I., GY8 0QD

Tel: (07781) 166924

Email: jamie.hooper@cwgsy.net
gsybiorecords@gmail.com



Environment Guernsey
Environmental contracting & consulting

Environment Guernsey is the wholly owned company of La Société Guernesiaise

We manage La Société's nature reserves and undertake numerous land management contracts for various States of Guernsey Departments, the National Trust and private individuals. We also run the Guernsey Biological Records Centre and provide an environmental consultancy service.

For all aspects of conservation advice and contracting, please contact us.

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Land Management & Conservation Officer	Jamie Hooper	266924	reserves@societe.org.gg
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Zoology	Vacant		
Projects:			
Conservation Herd	Dave Bartram		conservationherd@societe.org.gg
Guernsey Seasearch	Vacant		

Other Council members are: Jamie Hooper (co-opted), Roy Bisson, Rodney Collenette, Angela Salmon & Colin Spicer.

Office hours:

Our office at Candie is open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning between 10am and 11.30am.

Email: societe@cwgsy.net **Website:** www.societe.org.gg **Tel:** 01481 725093

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